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FLOOR DEBATE

April 18, 2001 LB 598

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Baker.

SENATOR BAKER: I'd call the question, please.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Do I see five hands? I do. The question is, shall debate cease? All in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Have you all voted? Record.

CLERK: 27 ayes, 3 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Debate ceases. Senator Thompson, you're recognized to close on your amendment.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I think everyone who works in the juvenile justice system wants what's going to be best and most effective for the child, in terms of rehabilitation. And they want to protect the community. And they want very good outcomes. We haven't talked about that much today, because we're talking about procedure. LB 598, as it's been amended, gives the decision for a placement of a juvenile offender to the Department of Health and Human Services. It becomes a total administrative decision. We were in a similar position about 10-12 years ago, on both sides, juvenile justice and child welfare. Actually, the Department of Health and Human Services, at that time, did not provide services to juvenile offenders per se, and the bill that addressed that didn't...in the end took that idea out. But we're back with it again today. So the question is, do you adopt my amendment, which incorporates LB 598, which says the department can make the placement, but it requires two things? I want you to think about whether, if this were you, or your child, or your grandchild, how you would feel if you knew that the only review of where your child was going to be placed, could be in the state, could be out of the state, could be in your community, could be somewhere else, the only place that was going to be able to make that decision would be in the Department of Health and Human Services. Now think about it, if you read the series last week, in the Lincoln Journal Star and think how comfortable you would feel about that. Parents are important to the process. Sometimes it's the kid's grandparent,